

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, RP  
SUBJECT: BATASANG BAYAN CONSIDERS ELECTIONS AND SABAH CLAIM

REF: MANILA 13187

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MARCOS CONVENED A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE BATASANG BAYAN (INTERIM LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL) ARUGUST 27. MARCOS REITERATED TO THE 129-MEMBER BODY HIS DETERMINATION TO HOLD LOCAL ELECTIONS SOMETIME NEXT YEAR AND TO RENOUNCE PHILIPPINE CLAIM TO SABAH, WITHOUT SPECIFYING WHEN OR HOW EITHER WILL BE ACHIEVED. THE BATASANG BAYAN PASSED RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS ON A PROPOSED 1977 ELECTION CODE AND HOW TO RETRACT SABAH CLAIM, AS WELL AS RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF 33.9 MILLION PESOS GOVERNMENT BUDGET FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1978. END SUMMARY.

2. ELECTIONS. IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT TO BATASANG BAYAN, PRESIDENT MARCOS SAID THAT DESPITE FORMIDABLE OBSTACLES HE IS DETERMINED TO CALL LOCAL ELECTIONS. HE PROCLAIMED AS HE DID LAST WEEK TO WORLD LAW CONFERENCE, "IT IS NOT MY INTENTION TO LEAVE A LEGACY THE INSTITUIN OF A  
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COMMAND SOCIETY TO OUR PEOPLE." MARCOS NOTED THAT THE PHILIPPINE PEOPLE HAVE ACQUIRED DEMOCRATIC HABITS AND ARE USED TO ELECTORAL PROCESS. HE SAID, "WE CANNOT ALLOW PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE SIMPLE BE- CASUSE NO SUCCESSORS HAVE BEEN ELECTED IN THEIR POSITIONS..." MARCOS SAID PRESENT CONDITIONS MERIT MOVES TOWARD POLITI- CAL NORMALIZATION. "CRIME IS ON THE WANE, THE REBELLION

HAS BEEN MET, AND MOST IMPORTANT, THE WAY TO THE EXADICATION OF THE ROOT CAUSES OF CRIME AND INSURGENCY HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY MADE A PART OF THE NATIONAL LIFE AND EFFORT." HE ADDED THAT THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY "IS CHARACTERIZED BY RESILIENT AND VIGOUROUS GROWTH." THEREFORE, HE CONCLUDED, THE TIME HAS COME TO PUT OUTSELVES TO THE TEST." MARCOS LEFT DOOR OPEN FOR NATIONAL ELECTION AS WELL. HE TOLD BATASANG BAYAN MEMBERS THAT TIME HAS COME TO START PLANNING FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS EVEN AS IT NOW PREPARES TO HOLD LOCAL ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR.

4. INFLUENTIAL COLUMNIST DOROY VALENCIA WROTE IN THE DAILY EXPRESS AUGUST 29 THAT "MARCOS WANTS NATIONAL ELECTIONS TO PRECEDE LOCAL ELECTIONS,...MISCALUATION OF OBSERVERS MAY HAPPEN BUT THE ONLY CERTAIN THING IS THAT WE WILL HAVE ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR. IT COULD HAPPEN THAT WE MAY STAGE LOCAL ELECTIONS FIRST, BUT THIS IS UNLIKELY."

5. AFTER LENGTHY BUT TAME DEBATE, BATASANG BAYAN PASSED RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ELECTION CODE COMMITTEE HEADED BY SOLICITOR GENERAL ESTELITO MENDOZA TO CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARINGS ON A NEW STATUE GOVERNING CONDUCT OF FUTURE ELECTIONS. A DRAFT OF THE NEW STATUTE, LABELLED OMNIBUS ELECTORAL LAW OF 1977, WAS MADE PUBLIC AUGUST 28. IT LIMITS PERIOD OF CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION SPENDING AND PROHIBITS VARIOUS FORMS OF ELECTION FRAUD OR COERCION.  
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6. SABAH CLAIM. MARCOS' LONG SPEECH ALSO COVERED SABAH QUESTION, EXPLAING HIS CONVICTION THAT PHILIPPINES SHOULD DROP ITS CLAIM TO ENSURE LASTING PEACE IN MINDANAO AND ASEAN SOLIDARITY AND REQUESTING THE BATASANG BAYAN TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS TO SAMPLE PUBLIC OPINION ON THE SABAH CLAIM. HE DID NOT REVEAL, HOWEVER, WHAT COURSE HE WILL FOLLOW TO DROP FORMALLY THE PHILIPPINE CLAIM, ONLY ANNOUNCING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WILL REVIEW THE LEGAL ISSUES SURROUNDINGS THE RENUNCIATION OF THE CLAIM. THE BATASANG BAYAN LOYALLY AUTHORIZED THE PUBLIC HEARINGS.

6. COMMENT: BATASANG BAYAN SPECIAL SESSION WAS HASTILY ANNOUNCED TWO DAYS AFTER PRESIDENT MARCOS' SPEECH TO WORLD PEACE THROUGH LAW CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE STATED INTER ALIA THAT LOCAL ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD "NOT LATER THAN NEXT YEAR" (SEE REFTTEL). AS USUAL, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CONFUSTION AS TO WHAT SESSION WOULD DO OR HOW LONG IT WOULD LAST. GOP ORIGINALLY ANNOUNCED SPECIAL SESSION WOULD LAST DAYS. HOWEER, SESSION ADJOURNED EARLY EVENING AUGUST 27, AND PRESS REPORTED THAT BATASANG BAYAN "WILL BE CONENED BY THE PRESIDENT TO ANOTHER SESSION AT A LATER DATE."

THIS BATASANG BAYAN MEETING, LIKE PREVIOUS SESSIONS, WAS LONG ON SHOWMANSHIP AND SHORT ON SUBSTANCE. TWO KEY ISSUES, HOLDING OF ELECTIONS AND THE SABAH CLAIM, WERE, AS PRESIDENT MARCOS IS ONT TO SAY, "VENTILATED," BUT NO STEPS WERE TAKEN TO SET DATE OR SPECIFY MANNER IN WHICH ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD OR SABAH CLAIM DROPPED. ALL RESOLUTIONS WERE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY EXCEPT THAT ON ELECTIONS, ON WHICH LONE, UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER CASE NEGATIVE VOTE. STULL

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## Message Attributes

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